

Key messages

Results of National Youth Engagement Activities

Youth Dialogue
27 October 2015
Helsinki, Finland

Towards a new vision
for the public sector

A large graphic consisting of a white arrow pointing right, set against a background of orange and red geometric shapes. The text "YOUTH DIALOGUE FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH" is written in white, uppercase letters, following the path of the arrow.

YOUTH
DIALOGUE
FOR INCLUSIVE
GROWTH

Where are we now?

- Youth have limited information on how to engage with civic life, including how the political and decision-making systems work. A key message emerging from the youth engagement activities appears to be: “youth are interested, they just simply do not know how to get involved and how government works”.
- Trust emerged as an important theme for youth: youth feel as though political and administrative leaders do not value or take seriously youth engagement and contribution to policy development, and that politicians are not truly listening to their voices.
- There is a lack of existing structures in place to encourage youth to participate and be engaged with civic life, such as youth parliaments, councils, and other participatory structures

Where do we want to be?

- Youth considers school to play an important role in encouraging civic education. They want to be given more choice to choose their own curricula and participate in schools life. Informal learning is seen as an opportunity to strengthen civic engagement.
- Political leaders need to rethink youth engagement and take it seriously. There is an expectation that leaders get more active not only by listening to youth needs but also participating in youth events and fora. In other words, leaders must be more accessible, speak a language youth can understand and discuss issues youth care about (e.g. employment and access to secure jobs). This also mean facilitating the creation of physical space for engagement including with youth organisations, such as parliaments, councils, and other participatory structures; and empower youth associations to play an active role as interest brokers.

- Youth see technology as a powerful enabler of enhanced dialogue with government. Social media and online platforms can be better used to inform youth and give them opportunities to participate and establish connections with youth organisations. Social media provides the ideal means to open up dialogues on issues that matter to youth such as environment protection, employment, immigration and voluntary services.

How will we get there?

- Youth want government to create more opportunities to participate. This can be accomplished by crafting and funding youth organisations, such as youth parliaments, participatory budgeting, centres, camps, and development programs. In addition, technology should be leveraged to reach more youth.
- Increasing youth involvement in civic life will require reforming the civic education system to create connections with practical engagement activities and teaching the value of participation.
- Youth want politicians to actively involve youth in consultations and program design. This requires having respect for the demands of youth and as well as providing information about where youth can get actively involved.